

Cioran's Nietzsche

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Willis G. Regier

Cioran's Nietzsche

Susan Sontag wrote that Cioran

comes after Nietzsche, who set down almost the whole of Cioran's position a century ago. An interesting question: why does a subtle, powerful mind consent to say what has, for the most part, already been said? . . . Whatever the answer, the "fact" of Nietzsche has undeniable consequences for Cioran. He must tighten the screws, make the argument denser. More excruciating. More rhetorical.¹

Sontag's essay has become a touchstone for taking Cioran seriously as a philosopher and the correlations between Cioran and Nietzsche she described are now staples of Cioran criticism.

Sontag's junction of Cioran and Nietzsche has been steadily reinforced. As a postscript to his book on Nietzsche, Clément Rosset puts Cioran in the tradition of Nietzsche's *Gay Science* and credits him for posing the most serious and most grave question to philosophy: whether an alliance is possible between lucidity and joy. Two of Cioran's most esteemed translators, Ilinca Zarifopol-Johnson and Sanda Stolojan, separately asserted that Nietzsche was a major influence on Cioran in the 1930s. Cioran's friend, the Spanish philosopher Fernando Savater, emphasized how much the two have in common. In a close comparison of Cioran's Romanian works with Nietzsche's books and *Nachlass*, Lucia Gorgoi found multiple similarities in style and substance, particularly regarding aphorisms and nihilism. Patrice Bollon's summary of Cioran's philosophy links it to Nietzsche more frequently than to any other philosopher.²

Despite all this, Nietzsche and Cioran are a pair that ought not be taken for granted, for three reasons: affinity and resemblance are too easily mistaken for agreement and influence; Cioran strenuously resisted

falling into the orbit of other authors; and he specifically asserted his independence from Nietzsche. In his later books and interviews, Cioran often described Nietzsche as “naïve,” and from the 1930s on he felt superior to the philosopher of the superman.³ Treating Cioran and Nietzsche in tandem is more faithful to both when their clashing skepticisms and stark differences are mutually respected.

Cioran knew Nietzsche’s work well. Although little of Nietzsche had been translated into Romanian, Cioran could read German from earliest youth and found the language no obstacle. A school notebook from Cioran’s teens survives with his neatly copied passages from Nietzsche, interspersed with passages from Balzac, Diderot, Flaubert, Lichtenberg, Schopenhauer, and his greatest passion, Dostoyevsky. Dostoyevsky stood between Cioran and Nietzsche as a buffer and bond. Despite the clash of Dostoyevsky’s Christianity with his own atheism, Nietzsche himself praised Dostoyevsky as “the only psychologist from whom I had something to learn.”⁴ Léon Chestov cites this passage as his starting point in *La Philosophie de la tragédie: Dostoïewsky et Nietzsche* and gave precedence to Dostoyevsky throughout, as Cioran would do. Chestov was also author of *L’Idée de bien chez Tolstoi et Nietzsche*. Cioran claimed Chestov—not Nietzsche—as “my philosopher” during the interwar years.⁵ According to Chestov, Nietzsche’s break with Wagner and his reaction against Schopenhauer were the “worst misfortune that could befall a man, to break with his teachers,” events that isolated Nietzsche, reflecting on his pain and solitude like a Dostoyevsky character.⁶ Rupture, suffering, and solitude became Cioran’s literary preoccupations.

The chief promoter of Nietzsche in Romania during Cioran’s youth was Lucien Blaga, whom Cioran put “on a pedestal.”⁷ Like Cioran, Blaga was born in Transylvania as the son of a priest (Nietzsche was the son of a Lutheran pastor), imitated Zarathustra’s ecstasies, and adopted Nietzsche’s themes and motifs. Much of what now seems to be Nietzschean in early Cioran was pre-selected by Blaga.⁸ Blaga made Nietzsche essential reading and German philosophy essential education. Cioran obliged. He studied philosophy at the University of Bucharest, reading Fichte, Hegel, Husserl, Kant, Simmel, and more Schopenhauer and Nietzsche. He then went closer to the source. Between 1933 and 1935 Cioran studied under Nicolai Hartmann and Ludwig Klages at the

Friedrich-Wilhelm Universität in Berlin as a Humboldt fellow; Klages was the author of *Die psychologischen Errungenschaften Nietzsches* (1926). Like Klages (and like Nietzsche's most popular interpreter in the United States, Walter Kaufmann), Cioran most admired Nietzsche as a psychologist. In Berlin while Hitler consolidated the Third Reich, Cioran had his fill of philosophy. He read Heidegger's *Sein und Zeit* and began to study Buddhism.⁹ He despised Heidegger, loved Schopenhauer, and complained that Simmel, author of *Schopenhauer und Nietzsche* (1907), was not more widely read; like Cioran, Simmel connects Nietzsche directly to Christian mystics.¹⁰

In 1934 Cioran published his first book, *Pe culmile disperării* [*On the Heights of Despair*], launching a literary career from a stormy mountaintop like an epigone Zarathustra, with an insolence and atheism that would ever after connect him to Nietzsche. The book won the King Carol II Foundation award for young authors, winning Cioran a notoriety he later scorned. *Pe culmile disperării* is peppered with nihilist titles: "The Passion for the Absurd," "Nothing Is Important," and "Nothing Matters." Cioran does not quote others and rarely names a name, but by declaring "an existence which does not hide a great madness has no value" and by decrying "the vanity of compassion," he invited comparison to Nietzsche's *Birth of Tragedy* and *Genealogy of Morals*.¹¹ In his twenties Cioran might have enjoyed the comparison, but as he grew older he refused it. In a 1985 interview he remarked that his career had been Nietzsche's in reverse: Cioran had begun in madness, Nietzsche had ended there.¹²

Gabriel Liiceanu noted that despite their rapprochements, due to their handling of nihilism, their aphoristic style, and their conceptions of history, "Nietzsche remains, for Cioran, a passion of early youth, which later lapsed."¹³ It also shifted focus, from Nietzsche's writings to his life and tastes. Cioran was partial to *Ecce Homo*; he concurred with Nietzsche's attention to the body; he shared Nietzsche's affection for Shakespeare, Pascal, and Dostoyevsky. Pages could be filled with parallel passages. At those points where Cioran assumes his superiority and spurns Nietzsche, he is vulnerable to Nietzschean counterattacks on his egoism, resentments, and vestigial Christianity. Cioran shaped his thinking in part as a reaction against Nietzsche, and in part, as Sontag observed, by pushing Nietzsche's notions even further.

Cioran quoted Nietzsche pointedly, referred to him in specific contexts, and frankly expressed what he liked and disliked about him. Though he felt he had outlived and outgrown Nietzsche, he did not disown him.

Cioran Reading Nietzsche

Cioran's second book, *Cartea Amăgirilor* [*Book of Mistakes*], was published in 1936. It is second-generation *Birth of Tragedy*, explaining how Cioran would refresh the spirit of music with fluids of eros. For the first time Cioran expresses his attitudes toward specific artists and writers: Nietzsche is the author most often named. Cioran berates philosophers for how little good they have done him, but excludes Nietzsche because "obviously he is more than a philosopher."¹⁴

Cartea Amăgirilor shouts why Cioran could not embrace Nietzsche without reserve: Cioran was much too intrigued by the arts and experiences of Christianity. Contrary to Nietzsche's incarnation of the Antichrist, Cioran believed it was possible to know religion was an illusion and still cling to it. Its aesthetics were more important than its ontology. Cioran was fascinated with saints, his writing depended heavily on Christian imagery: angels and apocalypse, Eden and original sin, temptations and superstitions, martyrs and crucifixion. Nietzsche denounced German philosophy as "an *insidious* theology"; Cioran embraced German music, Bach especially, as surrogate religion. Whatever his religious doubts, Cioran adored religious music, Bach especially: "Bach is another word for the sublime," he wrote, and more provocatively, "Bach, Shakespeare, Beethoven, Dostoyevsky, and Nietzsche are the only arguments against monotheism."¹⁵ Cioran thought that Nietzsche's Titanic character was essentially religious and later insulted Nietzsche by calling him an "anti-Christian Christian."¹⁶

Cioran's third book, *Lacrimi și sfinți* [*Tears and Saints*], presented his ideas with enough blasphemy to scandalize his publisher, parents, and friends. He quotes Nietzsche for the first time in print, and does so twice. First from *Ecce Homo*: "I cannot differentiate between tears and music." Cioran adds, "Whoever is not immediately struck by the profundity of this statement has not lived for a minute in the intimacy of music."¹⁷ The second quotation, from *Dionysos Dithyramben*:—"You have been searching for the heaviest load, and you have found your-

self"¹⁸—confirms that it is Nietzsche as psychologist that attracts Cioran rather than Nietzsche as philosopher.

For his fourth book, *Schimbarea la Față a României* [Romania's Transfiguration], Cioran adopted the role of national prophet, telling Romania what it needed to do to create its own destiny. His national model was Germany, his antitype was France, his remedies rapid industrialization and militarism, and his sources came from every corner of his vast reading: Baudelaire, Kant, Hegel, Stirner, Spengler, Dostoyevsky, Kierkegaard, Keyserling, Hitler, Lenin, Ibsen, Karl Barth, Maître Eckhart, Weininger, Valéry, Proust, Eminescu, of course, Nietzsche. He based his criticism of Romania in part on Nietzsche's criticism of German barbarity.¹⁹ Though others appropriated Nietzsche as the philosopher for fascism, Cioran treated him as just one in a crowd of names that could be cited in passing. The book was an embarrassment to Cioran in the post-war years. He later felt as though it had been written by someone else.²⁰

Europe again at war, he published *Amurgul gândurilor* [Twilight of Thought], a title that echoed Nietzsche and Wagner at a time more ominous than they foresaw. Its French title, *Le Crépuscule des pensées*, intensifies the tie to Pascal. It was Cioran's first book of wide-ranging aphorisms, no longer bound to an organizing topic. Its relationship to Nietzsche's *Twilight of the Idols* is only superficial, part of a fashion for the crepuscular that engaged writers for decades, including Victor Hugo, Paul Valéry, and Pablo Neruda. Cioran's book expresses some interest in the "erotic liturgy" of Wagner but only mentions Nietzsche once: "Pascal—and above all Nietzsche—seem like reporters of eternity."²¹ With its emphasis on paradox and suicide, its immersion in Christian themes, its elaboration on ennui, and its explicit denunciation of modern philosophy, *Amurgul gândurilor* sets an agenda Cioran would follow thereafter. The last book Cioran wrote in Romanian, *Îndreptar Pătimaș* [Prayer book of the Vanquished], does not mention Nietzsche at all.

Cioran came to France under the pretense that he would write a thesis on the ethics of Nietzsche, a thesis he never intended to write.²² When he arrived in Paris in 1937, French writers were in the midst of the "deuxième moment français de Nietzsche," whose most visible proponent would be Georges Bataille.²³ Nietzsche is scarcely mentioned in Cioran's first books written in French, *Précis de décomposi-*

tion (1949), *Syllogismes de l'amertume* (1952), *La tentation d'exister* (1956), and *Histoire et utopie* (1960), with the most extended passage in *Syllogismes de l'amertume*:

We measure his fecundity by the possibilities he affords us of continually repudiating him without exhausting him. A nomad mind, he is good at varying his disequilibriums. [. . .] By exhibiting his hysterias, Nietzsche has spared us the shame of ours; his miseries were salutary for us. He has opened *the age of "complexes."*²⁴

The passage validates Sontag's appraisal of Cioran as a Nietzschean who thinks against himself. Nietzsche is not quoted again until *La Chute dans le temps* (1964). There Cioran approvingly recalls Nietzsche's famous description of man as "das noch nicht festgestellte Tier," the animal whose type is not yet determined.²⁵

In the 1960s Cioran was reading Nietzsche again. In his 1964 notebook he copied approvingly a phrase from *Human, All Too Human* in which Nietzsche remarks that good writers do not write for "die spitzen und überscharfen Leser," knowing and over-acute readers.²⁶ In his 1965 notebook Cioran copied without comment a French translation of a passage from *Ecce Homo*: "When I have looked into my Zarathustra, I walk up and down in my room for half an hour, unable to master an unbearable sobbing."²⁷ A year later he noted that "*The Genealogy of Morals* is a book that predicts Nazism as well as psychoanalysis. The importance of Nietzsche is to have been the prophet of movements and doctrines that exclude him."²⁸ Cioran complained, "Nietzsche tires me. My lassitude sometimes goes almost to disgust. One cannot accept a thinker who has placed the ideal at the antipodes of what he is."²⁹ Cioran recognized that Nietzsche is "interesting and seductive, but his conclusions seem to be neither pertinent nor true."³⁰ In 1969 he wrote revealingly, "I can no longer read Nietzsche. He is too much a part of my past."³¹ Since his past included an affiliation with the Iron Guard, Romania's fascist brigade, he regretted that part of it most saturated with a Nietzsche vogue.

But he did continue to read Nietzsche, to comment on him, and compare himself to him. He liked *Ecce Homo* when he ceased to like others of Nietzsche's last works.³² In his last book, *Aveux et anathèmes* (1987), Cioran laments Nietzsche's disintegrating musical judgment. "Brahms represents 'die Melancholie des Unvermögens,' the melancholy of impotence, according to Nietzsche. This judgment, which he

put forward on the brink of the philosopher's collapse, forever dims its luster."³³ It is doubly typical that Cioran was particularly interested in Nietzsche's collapse and disappointed that the collapse was tarnished by a lapse in taste.

Cioran Contra Nietzsche

Cioran's fame as a French author paled in the shadow of his *Précis de décomposition*. Despite his own dissatisfactions with the book and his efforts to surpass it, he was known as "the author of the *Précis*" well into the 1980s, when his career was nearly completed.³⁴ In *Précis*, Cioran had not yet committed himself to the aphoristic condensation and high polish that would later draw readers' praise. He was still inclined to effusion, still admired Nietzsche's lyricism, and criticized Nietzsche for not being Dionysian enough: "If Nietzsche foundered, it was as a poet and visionary: he expiated his ecstasies and not his arguments." In a section on the importance of poets, he names Shelley, Baudelaire, and Rilke, then argues,

Much more than in the school of the philosophers, it is in the academy of poets that we learn the courage of intelligence and the audacity to be ourselves. Their "affirmations" outdo the most strangely impertinent sayings of the ancient sophists. No one adopts them: has there ever been a single thinker who went as far as Baudelaire or who steeled himself to systematize a Lear's howl, Hamlet's soliloquy? Nietzsche perhaps before his end, but unfortunately he kept harping on his prophet's string.

In 1949, contrarian Cioran thought that "a mind matters only to the degree that it deceives itself as to what it wants, what it loves, or what it hates; being *several*, it cannot choose *itself*. A pessimism without raptures, an agitator of hopes without bitterness, deserves only scorn." Thus he was intrigued by Marcus Aurelius, Julian the Apostate, Luther, Rousseau, and by Nietzsche, "whose entire *oeuvre* is nothing but a hymn to power" dragging out "a sickly existence of a poignant monotony."³⁵ In 1965, looking back at *Précis*, he discovered the book had deceived him and its faults greatly displeased him, exposing him as a belated Romantic.³⁶ By then he had found the same faults in Nietzsche, too, faults mostly of style.

The further I go, the more I find myself opposed at every point to Nietzsche's ideas. I like less and less the delirious thinkers. I prefer the sages and skeptics, the 'unin-

spired' par excellence, those whom no unhappiness can excite or upset. I like the thinkers who evoke ice-covered volcanoes.³⁷

As he grew older, Cioran described his declining enthusiasm for Nietzsche as a youthful passion. He saw the passion repeated in the youth of Paris of the 1960s, where he witnessed a new "*nietzschéisation* de la France,"³⁸ and repudiated it.

By the 1970s, Cioran had lived longer than Nietzsche did and had witnessed the differences aging makes in perspective and appreciation. "To a student who wanted to know where I stood with regard to the author of *Zarathustra*, I replied that I had long since stopped reading him. Why? 'I find him too naïve.'" The older Cioran held Nietzsche's fervor against him.

He demolished so many idols only to replace them with others: a false iconoclast, with adolescent aspects and a certain virginity, a certain innocence inherent in his solitary's career. He observed men only from a distance. Had he come closer, he could have neither conceived nor promulgated the superman, that preposterous, laughable, even grotesque chimera, a crotchet which could occur only to a mind without time to age, to know the long serene disgust of detachment.³⁹

Because Cioran *resembled* Nietzsche comparisons kept coming up. He kept batting them down, repeating in one interview after another the same indictment: Nietzsche was naïve.⁴⁰ "Nietzsche, who had wanted to overthrow everything, is at bottom only a naïf. He trails after him too much innocence."

The complaint extended to Nietzsche's writing style. "I can no longer read Nietzsche or take an interest in him. He seems too naïve. It has been a long time since I've ceased to admire him. A diminished idol. He took pleasure in prolixity, in padding, in *grandiose* diffusion."⁴¹ "We must censure the later Nietzsche for a panting excess in the writing, the absence of *rests*."⁴² He was too lyrical and his literary taste was second-rate.⁴³

Older Cioran was put off by Nietzsche's inexperience, by his megalomania, and by his lack of humor. "Nietzsche was too carried away by a tragic breeze to be capable of that form of skepticism that presupposes humor." Cioran believed that Nietzsche's lack of humor was one reason for his success among the young. Nietzsche was too solitary to understand the conflicts that exist between people, or the means

by which people were able to coexist in large cities.⁴⁴ At first Cioran exempted Nietzsche from his fulminations against modern philosophers, but in his later years he thought Nietzsche was too academic and knew too little of life. Nietzsche didn't understand Greece, and worse, he didn't understand himself. He was "a lamb who dreamt he was a wolf."⁴⁵

Nietzsche in Cioran

The very qualities that repulsed Cioran later in life had attracted him when he was young. Looking back in 1952, Cioran remembered,

In Nietzsche, we loved Zarathustra, his poses, his mystical clown-show, a real *farmer's market of the peaks*. [. . .] We had believed with Nietzsche in the perpetuity of trances; thanks to the maturity of our cynicism, we have ventured further than he. The notion of the superman now strikes us as no more than a lucubration.⁴⁶

Nietzsche had urged his readers to go further than he did; Cioran had done so chiefly by living longer than Nietzsche, and by living his entire adult life in European capitals, Bucharest, Berlin, and Paris.

Their similarities are striking. Both made their reputations by blasting against systematic philosophy and attacking Christianity. Both perfected the acerbic aphorism. Both sought cultural regeneration through art, and mainly through music. In *Cartea Amăgirilor* Cioran tried to explain ecstasy in musical terms; against Nietzsche's will to power he opposed the will to Eros.⁴⁷ Both denied historical progress. Both admired Schopenhauer, Dostoyevsky, Pascal, and the skeptics. Both emphasize the body and the importance that bodily ills and urges should have for philosophy. Cioran was all about the body, and well after he claimed to have ceased reading Nietzsche he commended Nietzsche's sensitivity to the play of climate upon body and mind.⁴⁸ In book after book Cioran stressed the value of illness and unhappiness. He felt near Nietzsche because of his sickness. "The weak, the sick, the wretched who *dare* to propose a new credo to humanity: Nietzsche, the most lamentable and the most hopeful of all."⁴⁹ Comparing himself to Nietzsche in 1985, Cioran recalled reading a book in his youth entitled *Genius and Syphilis*, and was impressed by it, thinking that syphilis was a prestigious disease. "I wanted to be syphilitic," he admitted, and was disappointed when blood tests proved otherwise.⁵⁰

Cioran was the more fortunate in his attitude toward women. Nietzsche affirmed, "The degree and kind of a man's sexuality reach up into the ultimate pinnacle of his spirit," and expressed his own degree and kind in infamous misogyny.⁵¹ The Cioran of *Cartea Amăgirilor* and *Amurgul gândurilor* was well on his way to repeating the idea, writing, "Woman has attained her summits only in saintliness."⁵² Cioran asks, "If one had to choose between music and women, who knows whether we would not give preference to music?"⁵³ He never had to make that choice. Instead, in 1942 he met Simone Boué, who remained his companion for the rest of his life. (By excluding any hint of their relationship from his books, interviews, and even his *Cahiers*, Cioran made himself more like Nietzsche, solitary and unloved.) She supported him, typed his manuscripts, traveled with him, entertained his friends and visitors, and his early misogyny diffused into general misanthropy.

She also shared Cioran's trouble sleeping, a characteristic he connected to Nietzsche. In 1986, in reply to a question about Susan Sontag's comparison of Cioran and Nietzsche, Cioran said, "There is, I dare say, a resemblance of temperament between Nietzsche and me: we are both insomniacs. That creates a complicity."⁵⁴ The complicity extended to common ideas about suicide and the salutary value of *thinking* about suicide as a means for surviving sleepless nights. Cioran said that "without the idea of suicide I would certainly have killed myself"; Nietzsche wrote: "The thought of suicide is a powerful comfort: it helps one through many a dreadful night."⁵⁵

In *Ecce Homo* Nietzsche had advised, "I am one thing, my writings are another." Cioran described his own books as camouflaged confessions.⁵⁶ In *Écartèlement*, in a passage adjacent to a reflection on Nietzsche, Cioran exclaimed, "Woe to the book you can read without constantly wondering about the author!"⁵⁷ All along, Cioran situated Nietzsche's writings in the context of his life, judging them against each other. His later works emphasize Nietzsche's biography, especially his last years, his eleven years as a madman, rushing to his mirror staring at his hands.⁵⁸ Cioran admired Nietzsche because he pushed himself to the point of catastrophe, because he chose to be excessive, to be vehement, because he suffered and exaggerated.⁵⁹ In the course of his career, Cioran paid Nietzsche many compliments:

"Nietzsche's greatest merit is that he knew how to defend himself from saintliness. What would have become of him had he let loose his natural impulses? He would have been a Pascal with all the saint's madresses."⁶⁰

"Masters in the art of thinking against oneself, Nietzsche, Baudelaire, and Dostoyevsky have taught us to side with our dangers, to broaden the sphere of our diseases, to acquire existence by division from our being."⁶¹

"A Kierkegaard, a Dostoyevsky, a Nietzsche override their own experiences, like their 'spells,' because they are *worth* more than what 'happens' to them. Their destiny precedes their life."⁶²

Like the Nietzsche of *Ecce Homo*, Cioran admired Nietzsche's writing, despite its padding and grandiosity: "Nietzsche is beyond doubt the greatest *German stylist*. In a country where philosophers write so badly, there had to be born as a reaction a verbal genius, such as did not even exist *among a people as enamoured of language as the French*. For in France there is no equivalent to Nietzsche—on the level of expression, I mean intensity of expression."⁶³ Cioran admired the fact that Nietzsche (unlike Heidegger) felt little need to create new words.⁶⁴

Nietzsche through Cioran

Cioran shows a way to read and appreciate Nietzsche. He read Nietzsche well into old age, and was faithful to Nietzsche in not becoming enchanted by him.

Nietzsche is a sum of attitudes, and it only diminishes him to comb his work for a will to order, a thirst for unity. A captive of his moods, he has recorded their variations. His philosophy, a meditation on his whims, is mistakenly searched by the scholars for the constants it rejects.⁶⁵

Citing this passage, Sontag remarked that "the line from Nietzsche to Cioran cannot be overemphasized."⁶⁶ She is right for at least two reasons: first, because it is the line that matters, particularly the places of Chestov and Blaga in that line, and second, because overemphasis is a Nietzschean tactic Cioran exercised throughout his career. No one needs to read Nietzsche to come to terms with Cioran. On the other hand, Cioran is a potent antidote to feverish Nietzscheanism.

As if to squelch a regiment of commentators, Cioran told himself,

No one has influenced me. I speak for myself. It is ridiculous to cite Schopenhauer or Nietzsche or whomever in order to define my 'Lebensgefühl' [existential feeling], which came to me from my ancestors and my propensity to convert my disappointments into misfortunes and my misfortunes into calamities.⁶⁷

Even if Cioran is an exemplar of his perception that a writer often deceives himself, there is good reason to respect his deprecation of Nietzsche's influence on his own work. Their similarities are often remarked, but their differences are greater.

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Notes

References to Cioran's works cite their first French editions, the collected one-volume *Œuvres*, and English translations, when they exist.

¹Sontag, "Thinking Against Oneself," 81.

²Rosset, *La Force majeure*, 101. Zarifopol-Johnson, "Cioran: The Temptation to Believe," preceding her translation of Cioran's *Tears and Saints*, vii-viii, xiii-xv, xix, xxi-xxiv. Stolojan, "La Seconde Naissance de Cioran," 40. Gorgoi, *Friedrich Nietzsche și cultura română interbelică*, 204-41. Savater, *Ensayo sobre Cioran*, 60, 78, 81, 84-85, 91-92, 100, 135, 140-41. Bollon, *Cioran, l'hérétique*, 212-24.

³"Nietzsche, qui a voulu bouleverser tant de choses, n'est au fond qu'un naïf. Il traînait après lui trop d'innocence," Cioran, *Cahiers*, 445; "Nietzsche, à tout prendre, n'est qu'un très grand naïf," *Cahiers*, 527; see also notes 32 and 34.

⁴Nietzsche, *Götzen-Dämmerung*, 45; *Werke*, 2.1021; *Portable Nietzsche*, 549.

⁵Chestov, *La Philosophie de la tragédie*, 6. Cioran, *Entretiens*, 134.

⁶Chestov, *La Philosophie de la tragédie*, 137. Cioran's close friend Benjamin Fondane was a "disciple" of Chestov; Cioran, *Exercices d'admiration*, 153; *Œuvres*, 1601; *Anathemas and Admirations*, 219.

⁷Cioran, *Cahiers*, 130.

⁸Hitchins, "Lucian Blaga and the Nietzsche Reception in Romania," 161-80.

⁹Liiceanu, *Itinéraires*, 19-32.

¹⁰Simmel, *Schopenhauer and Nietzsche*, 142.

¹¹Cioran, *Sur les cimes*, 16 and 67; *Œuvres*, 24 and 60; *Heights*, 10 and 61.

¹²Cioran, *Ein Gespräch*, 23; *Entretiens*, 147.

¹³Liiceanu, *Itinéraires*, 27-29.

¹⁴Cioran, *Le Livre de leurres*, 191; *Œuvres*, 232.

¹⁵Cioran, *Leurres*, 243; *Œuvres*, 266.

¹⁶Nietzsche, *Der Antichrist*, 10; *Werke*, 2.1171; *Portable Nietzsche*, 576. On Nietzsche's

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Titanism see Cioran's *Leurres*, 239; *Œuvres*, 264. For Nietzsche as Christian see Cioran's *Tears and Saints*, 89, a passage dropped from the French translation.

¹⁷Cioran, *Larmes*, 35–36; *Œuvres*, 290–91; *Tears and Saints*, 11; Nietzsche, “Ich weiß keinen Unterschied zwischen Tränen und Musik zu machen,” *Ecce Homo*, “Why I Am So Clever,” §7; *Werke*, 2.1093; *Basic Writings*, 708.

¹⁸*Tears and Saints*, 103. This passage was also dropped from the French translation. Nietzsche, “Du suchtest die schwerste Last: / da fandest du dich—,” “Zwischen Raubvögeln,” *Dionysos Dithyramben*; *Werke* 2.1251; “Between Birds of Prey,” in Grundlehner, *Poetry of Friedrich Nietzsche*, 204.

¹⁹Cioran, *Schimbarea*, 15.

²⁰Cioran, *Cahiers*, 694.

²¹Cioran, *Le Crépuscule des pensées*, 86; *Œuvres*, 391.

²²Cioran, *Entretiens*, 11.

²³Le Rider, *Nietzsche en France*, 153. Cioran had small use for Bataille (*Cahiers*, 111, 301, 375, 950), though Bataille had translated Chestov's *L'Idée de bien chez Tolstoi et Nietzsche* into French, making it accessible to him.

²⁴Cioran, *Syllogismes*, 51; *Œuvres*, 761; *Gall*, 37.

²⁵Cioran, *La Chute dans le temps*, 22; *Œuvres*, 1078; *The Fall into Time*, 44. Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, §62; *Werke*, 2.623; *Basic Writings*, 264.

²⁶Cioran, *Cahiers*, 205. Nietzsche, *Menschliches, Allzumenschliches*, 2.138; *Werke*, 1.790; *Human, All Too Human*, 245.

²⁷Cioran, *Cahiers*, 263. Nietzsche, “Wenn ich einen Blick in meinen Zarathustra geworfen habe, gehe ich eine halbe Stunde im Zimmer auf und ab, unfähig, über einen unerträglichen Krampf von Schluchzen Herr zu werden,” *Ecce Homo*, “Why I Am So Clever,” §4; *Werke*, 2.1089; *Basic Writings*, 702.

²⁸Cioran, *Cahiers*, 329.

²⁹*Ibid.*, 332.

³⁰Cioran, *Entretiens*, 252

³¹Cioran, *Cahiers*, 752.

³²*Ibid.*, 760.

³³“Brahms représenterait ‘die Melancolie des Unvermögens,’ la mélancolie de l’impuissance, si on en croyait Nietzsche. Ce jugement qu’il a porté au seuil de son effondrement en ternit à jamais l’éclat,” *Aveux et anathèmes*, 43; *Œuvres*, 1664; *Anathemas and Admirations*, 85. Nietzsche, *Fall Wagner*, “Postscript 2,” *Werke*, 2.934; *Basic Writings*, 643.

³⁴“Entretien avec Simone Boué,” in Dodille and Liiceanu, *Lectures de Cioran*, 31–32.

³⁵Cioran, *Précis de décomposition*, 72, 143, 246–47; *Œuvres*, 622, 670, 733; *A Short History of Decay*, 47, 99, 177.

³⁶Cioran, *Cahiers*, 318.

³⁷Cioran, “Plus je vais, plus je me trouve en tout point à l’opposé des idées de Nietzsche. J’aime de moins en moins les penseurs délirants. Je leur préfère les sages et les sceptiques, les ‘non-inspirés’ par excellence, ceux qu’aucune douleur n’excite ni ne bouleverse. J’aime les penseurs qui évoquent des volcans refroidis,” *Cahiers*, 107.

³⁸Cioran, *Cahiers*, 404; see also 324–25.

³⁹Cioran, *De l’inconvenant*, 105–06; *Œuvres*, 1323; *Trouble*, 85. The idea of the superman is “puérile,” *Cahiers*, 117; “était ridicule (car théâtral),” *Cahiers*, 810; see also, *Cahiers*, 910.

⁴⁰Cioran, *Entretiens*, 56, 57, and 251.

⁴¹"Je ne peux plus lire Nietzsche ni m'y intéresser. Il me semble par trop naïf. Il y a déjà longtemps que j'ai cessé de l'admirer. Une idole en moins. Lui aussi s'est complu dans la proximité, le remplissage, le diffus *grandiose*," *Cahiers*, 659.

⁴²Cioran, *Ecartèlement*, 83; *Œuvres*, 1451; *Drawn and Quartered*, 79.

⁴³"Toute vision lyrique du monde, à la Nietzsche, m'est devenue insupportable," *Cahiers*, 754. On Nietzsche's taste, *Ecartèlement*, 155; *Œuvres*, 1491; *Drawn*, 158.

⁴⁴On Nietzsche's megalomania, see Cioran, *Cahiers*, 760; on his lack of humor, see *Cahiers*, 767 and 977; on his inexperience, *Cahiers*, 977.

⁴⁵Cioran, *Cahiers*, 580, 771.

⁴⁶Cioran, *Syllogismes de l'amertume*, 48–49; *Œuvres*, 761; *All Gall Is Divided*, 35–36.

⁴⁷Cioran, *Leurres*, 143; *Œuvres*, 201.

⁴⁸Cioran, *Entretiens*, 120. Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo*, "Why I Am So Clever," 2; *Werke*, 2.1085–86; *Basic Writings*, 696–98.

⁴⁹"Pascal, Dostoïevski, Nietzsche, Baudelaire—tous ceux dont je me sens près ont été des malades," *Cahiers*, 295; "Les faibles, les malades, les grabataires qui osent proposer un nouveau credo à l'humanité: Nietzsche, le plus lamentable et le plus *espérant* de tous," *Cahiers*, 775.

⁵⁰Cioran, *Ein Gespräch*, 24. For the French translation, Cioran omitted both the title of the book and his expressed desire to be syphilitic, *Entretiens*, 147–48.

⁵¹Nietzsche, "Grad und Art der Geschlechtlichkeit eines Menschen reicht bis in den letzten Gipfel seines Geistes hinauf," *Beyond Good and Evil*, §75; *Werke*, 2.626; *Basic Writings*, 271.

⁵²Cioran, *Leurres*, 137; *Œuvres*, 197. Late in his career Cioran was still willing to offend women: "As soon as a woman takes up philosophy, she becomes vain and aggressive," *Exercices*, 167; *Œuvres*, 1608; *Anathemas*, 227.

⁵³Cioran, *Leurres*, 69; *Œuvres*, 152.

⁵⁴Cioran, *Entretiens*, 167.

⁵⁵Cioran, *Entretiens* 175. "Sans l'idée du suicide, je me serais tué depuis toujours," *Syllogismes*, 87; *Œuvres*, 775; *Gall*, 69. Nietzsche, "Der Gedanke an den Selbstmord ist ein starkes Trostmittel: mit ihm kommt man gut über manche böse Nacht hinweg," *Beyond Good and Evil*, §157; *Werke*, 2.637; *Basic Writings*, 281.

⁵⁶Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo*, "Warum Ich so gute Bücher Schreibe," §1; *Werke*, 2.1099; *Basic Writings*, 715. Cioran, *Entretiens*, 281.

⁵⁷Cioran, *Ecartèlement*, 155; *Œuvres*, 1491; *Drawn*, 158.

⁵⁸On Nietzsche's mirror, see *Inconvénient*, 240; *Œuvres*, 1396; *Trouble*, 210; on Nietzsche staring at his hands, see *Cahiers*, 774.

⁵⁹"Parce qu'il est allé au bout de tout ce qu'il a entrepris. Pour son côté excessif," *Entretiens*, 269. "M'intéressent tous ceux qui vont à la catastrophe, et également ceux qui sont parvenus à se situer au-delà de la catastrophe. Ma plus grande admiration va à qui s'est trouvé sur le point de s'écrouler. C'est pour cela que j'ai aimé Nietzsche," *Entretiens*, 24. "Léon Bloy ou Nietzsche ou Dostoïevski—ce que j'ai aimé en eux, c'est la souffrance et l'exagération, ou plutôt: les *exagérations* de la souffrance," *Cahiers*, 494. On Nietzsche's vehemence, see *Cahiers*, 40.

⁶⁰Cioran, *Larmes*, 53; *Œuvres*, 298; *Tears and Saints*, 41

⁶¹Cioran, *La Tentation d'exister*, 9; *Œuvres*, 822; *The Temptation to Exist*, 35. "En Nietzsche, en Dostoïevski, s'expriment tous les types d'humanité possibles, toutes les expériences," *Entretiens*, 23.

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⁶²Cioran, *Exercices*, 186; *Œuvres*, 1618; *Anathemas*, 240–41

⁶³Nietzsche est sans aucun doute le plus grand *styliste allemand*. Dans un pays où les philosophes écrivaient si mal, devait naître par réaction un génie du Verbe, comme il n'en existe même pas chez un peuple amoureux de langage, comme l'est le peuple français. Car il n'y a pas en France l'équivalent d'un Nietzsche—sur le plan de l'expression, j'entends de l'intensité de l'expression *Cahiers*, 756.

⁶⁴Cioran, *Cahiers*, 800, and *Entretiens*, 106.

⁶⁵Cioran, *Tentation*, 150; *Œuvres*, 914; *Temptation*, 151.

⁶⁶Sontag, "Thinking Against Oneself," 91.

⁶⁷"Je ne suis influencé par personne. Je parle d'après moi. C'est ridicule de citer Schopenhauer ou Nietzsche ou qui que ce soit pour définir mon 'Lebensgefühl,' lequel me vient de mes ancêtres et de ma propension à convertir mes déboires en malheurs et mes malheurs en calamités," *Cahiers*, 690–91.

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